000
584 slowly disappearing. In some families, the
178 parents of the girl still arrange the match. There are, however, no exchange of presents, nor any similar ceremony, only mutual agreement. In the majority of cases, the young people decide for themselves with whom they want to live. Whether the match is pre-
583 arranged or not, a system of trial-marriage is
591 always customary. The young man moves into the house of the girl. He helps her family with work in the fields or hunting, and he lives with the girl. There is no sort of ceremony. When the couple feel contented with one another, and ready for the responsibility of their own household, they build themselves a house and leave the parental one. Nowadays,
585 when the priest appears on his bi-yearly visit, the couple frequently marries in the church, and it is quite a sight to see long-married couples with children, and who have suddenly decided to have a formal marriage ceremony, line up before the church door to be "married." On these occasions, a "marriage shawl" is sometimes used. This is a substitute for the
[177] colonial Spanish-American custom whereby the priest in Roman Catholic marriages places a gold chain over the couple. The shawl is handwoven with a white background and a few purple and red lines. The red lines are shorter and border the ends. They are woven in a diamond-shaped pattern. The present shawl is about fifty years old, and is badly eaten by moths and bugs. It is so seldom used that it will probably be permitted to fall into decay without being replaced.

837 The tribe itself is not concerned with "morality" in the western meaning. Both men and women often have a lover in addition to their spouse. Unlike the neighboring *Cavagra*, who
[184] have remained more isolated from white influence and are often blindly jealous of their women, the *Boruca* pay little attention to sexual wanderings. A man gives his love food,
[848 and nowadays, occasionally money. A woman
849] takes her illegitimate child home to her husband's house. The cases of illegitimate children are interesting in that a woman apparently has a child only when she wants one
586 (see p. 26). The writer could find no case of divorce in Boruca, although she was told that

[p. 22-A]

842 One of the most important functions of the witch doctor appears to be the control of birth. The *Boruca* have long been famous for having children only when they feel like it, not using an abortive, but a preventive or a provocative, as the case might be. They are very reticent [648] to admit even the existence of such a practice, however, through fear of the priest and of the Costa Rican Government, which in the past has persecuted the Talamancan peoples for this, as we shall see further on.

Both processes are brought about by taking certain liquid preparations given by the witch doctor. The sterilization process is called a *curada*, and when a woman has one or two children, the Indians say quite frankly that she is *curada*. It appears possible to be *curada* and then go to the *curandera* and become pregnant when one wants. Both remedies are drinks made from certain leaves, fungi, roots, and ferns. The sterilizing brew must be taken for fifteen days, stopped for fifteen days, and taken again for fifteen days. If badly prepared or taken too consistently without the interval in between, the drink is said to kill by causing hemorrhages. The neighbors of the *Boruca* all have, at least, the remedy to stop conception. The *Térraba*[20] do not practise it so often [177] today, as the Roman Catholic Church has apparently had more influence on them. The *Térraba* claim that their population has decreased violently since the past century because their women made themselves too sterile, and both sexes began to live together in any manner. They add that because of this, a curse has been put on them and they are dying out. It is a pity there is no census record to serve as comparative material. All of the remaining Talamanca peoples, such as the *Bribri*, the *Chirripó*, and the *Cabécares*, seem also to know this custom. In an unpublished report of Fathers Vincente Krautwog and Augustín Blessing of several trips made by them to the missions of Talamanca in the years 1894 to 1902, the originals of which are in the parochial archives in Limón, Costa Rica, the following statements are significant:

The women of the Estrella (valley) have very few children, because of certain remedies which they take

[p. 26-8]

842 without misgiving, publically, in order not to have off-spring. (These Indians were living in Caña Coén.)

I hardly baptized a baby, because a large portion of the women are sterile through a remedy which they take, be it from being deceived, be it from being lost, be it from their own evilness, taking and masticating in the woods the bark and the juice (sap) of dangerous trees. There are about four old women who are most guilty: María Caferina and Margarita in the house of Simeón, Rosalía, mother of Luis Quirós, and María, called "camisa," mother of the woman who lives with Miguel Medina, some four hours distant from Simeón. The evil of this "cure" ("curar"), being so alarming, I wrote a letter to the Mayor (Alcalde) don Lucas Alvarado, in which I authorized the authorities of Estrella to at least threaten these criminal women, in case they could not be intimidated, to take them prisoners to Limón. I attacked strongly on a thousand occasions this evil. . . .

The above was written in the year 1894. In 1897, we find the following:

The great evil of taking means not to bring forth young, is disappearing, and once again children are being born.

In Buenos Aires which is situated between Boruca and Talamanca, the Chirícano women are said to drink a preparation made by boiling [278] the leaves and stem of *Justicia tinctoria* ([Oerst.] Hemsl.) and drinking a gourd of this three times daily the first day of menstruation. As yet, we have not been able to verify this usage, but it is a curious fact that in the majority of the yards of these people this plant is [296] found. The excuse given for this plant is that it is used to wash clothes, serving as bluing.

The medicine to induce pregnancy is apparently more complicated than that to stop conception. The following is an analysis made by Dr. Reif in the United Fruit Company laboratory in La Lima, Honduras, of this medicine from the *Boruca* Indians:

278 842 A brown liquid with some flocculent precipitate and a strong odor of hydrogen sulfide indicating purition of organic matter. It is an aqueous solution containing some tannins but no alcohols, alkaloide or saponines. After evaporation of the liquid and removal of hydrogen sulfide smell, a strong odor re-

278 842 sembling that of Castoreum remained. This odor is possibly derived from glands of some tropical animal since beavers do not occur there.

The tannins would indicate that some bark or barks were used in the preparation. Microscopical examination of the residue did not give any clues.

[171] A few places where such practices as these are known are Africa, the Fiji Islands, and Ecuador.

278 757 The following is a list of the more generally known cures used by the *Boruca* and usually prescribed by the *curandera*.

Malaria is treated by drinking the liquid left from cooking the bark of a tree called *hombre grande* (*Quassia amara* L.), and sometimes, from boiling the fruits of the *cedrón* (*Simaba Cedron* Planch.)

For stomach-aches, a vine called in Boruca *so-kra'* (*Philodendron* sp.) is boiled with the ever useful *Kųikʃ-as* (*Piper* spp.), and drunk.

Dysentery in adults is treated by boiling the bark of the María tree, the guava tree, the leaves and the yuca-like root of the *contrayerva* (*Dorstenia Contrajerva* L.), and the ripe vanilla pod (*Vanilla fragrans* [Salisb] Ames).

Rheumatism is treated by rubbing the afflicted parts with the oil of the copaiba tree.

To stop boils, the leaves of the *kana kra'* (*Conostegia extinctoria* [Bonpl.] D. Don.) are used in combination with a lard made from the marrow of the leg bones of a cow and lemon juice. The lard helps to keep the leaves in place, and is supposed to aid in drawing out the poison.

752 278 For snake bites, some Indians, but not all, as the majority go to a *sukia* for this, use the leaf of the *guaco* (*Mikania Guaco* Humb. & Bonpl.). They mash the leaf, soak it in water, and then put it on the afflicted parts. Another remedy for snake bites is to use the bulb or root of the *Strychnos* or *curarina* vine (*Strychnos toxifera* Schonb. ex Benth.). This is cut into pieces and mixed with the *guaco* leaf and boiled very well. The resulting liquid is drunk. The most effective remedy for snake bites, however, seems to be the resin from the *caraña* tree (*Protium* spp.). This tree grows on the coast, particularly near Dominical. The resin is mixed with honey and is both drunk and applied to the bite.